

Cougars Hold Off Bulldogs for 63-52 Victory

WSU improves to 5-0 for the third-straight season

[box score](#)

NEWARK, N.J. – Freshman Klay Thompson recorded the first double-double of his career and the Cougars held off a late Bulldog run as the Washington State University men's basketball team defeated Mississippi State, 63-52, Friday in the semifinals of the Legends Classic at the Prudential Center.

Washington State (5-0) ended the game with a 5-0 run to hold off Mississippi State (5-1), which pulled as close as six points with three minutes to play. The Bulldogs fought back from a 17-point deficit with just over 11 minutes to go in the game.

Thompson, playing in his first game on the road of his college career, scored a game and career-high 19 points and added 10 rebounds and two steals. The 6-6 guard went 7-for-14 from the field and was a perfect 4-for-4 from the free throw line.

Senior Aron Baynes added a season-high with 17 points on 8-for-10 shooting from the field. Four of his eight field goals were dunks. Baynes and Thompson each had 13 points in the first half. Senior Taylor Rochestie added eight points, five assists and four rebounds, while junior Nikola Koprivica chipped in seven points, six rebounds, three assists and three steals.

Three players scored 10 points for Mississippi State, Kodi Augustus, Barry Stewart and Romero Osby. The Bulldogs are the only WSU opponent this season to have multiple players score in double figures. Although he just scored two points, Jarvis Varnado blocked four shots on the night.

WSU improved to 5-0 for the third-straight season and have won 21-straight regular season nonconference games, dating back to the 2006-07 season. The Cougars have not lost in the month of November under head coach Tony Bennett, holding a 19-0 mark.

The Cougars jumped out to a 12-4 lead with 15 and a half to play in the period. The Bulldogs countered with an 8-0 run to tie the game at 12 with 12 minutes to go. They moved on to their biggest lead at 18-15 with 8:15 left in the first period. WSU regained the lead for good at 26-24.

WSU went into halftime on fire, and continued it right out of the locker room, going on a 10-0 run which bridged the two halves. WSU reached its largest lead of the game at 17 points, 49-35, with just over 11 minutes left in the game. The Bulldogs clawed their way back, pulling within six, but the Cougars held on for the victory.

Washington State will take on the winner of the other semifinal game between Pittsburgh and Texas Tech which started after the conclusion of the Cougars' game. The game will tipoff 30 minutes after the third-place game which begins at 5:30 ET at the Prudential Center.

